
Institutional

Institutional uses in the Agassiz neighborhood are likely to have a significant effect on future development. Currently, there are two institutions of higher education located in the neighborhood, Harvard University, and Lesley University. These institutions comprise a substantial portion of the land in Agassiz. The buildings and land affiliated with the universities are privately owned and controlled. However, much of the open space is accessible to the public and the schools provide a number of cultural and recreational amenities to the neighborhood. The universities occasionally sponsor events that are open to the general public.

Harvard University

Historically, institutions have had a noticeable impact on the development of the Agassiz neighborhood. In 1817, the main development in the Agassiz neighborhood was Harvard University's Professors Row. This was a series of houses built by senior professors starting at the location of the current Science Center to Kirkland Street and out to Irving Street. Harvard University's North Yard (area north of Harvard Yard) is located in the Agassiz neighborhood. The North Yard area consists of a number of university-affiliated buildings as well as surface parking lots. The Harvard Peabody Museum and Natural History Museum are located in the North Yard and are visited frequently by elementary schools in Cambridge.

Based on the existing zoning in the area there is the potential for a significant amount of new

development, specifically along Hammond Street and in the existing parking lots located on Harvard University's land. This area is zoned C-3 residential, which allows single and two-family dwellings, townhouse dwellings, multifamily dwellings, institutional uses, hotels, a 120 foot height limit, (12 residential stories, or 8 to 9 research and development stories) and a floor to area ratio (FAR) of 3.0.

Recently, Harvard University initiated a study process with Agassiz neighbors, which resulted in the rezoning of the Hammond Street edge. The zoning change, adopted by the City Council in Spring 2002, created a 100 foot transition overlay zone in which building heights were reduced (generally to 35 feet), minimum setbacks were increased, and breaks in building massing were required to help protect the character of the neighborhood in the area.

Lesley University

Lesley University's Cambridge campus is located almost entirely in the Agassiz neighborhood. The school was first located at the corner of Everett and Oxford streets in the neighborhood in 1909, and was known as the Lesley Normal School. Today, Lesley University has about 8,000 students, however, most of the student body is located on campuses outside of Cambridge. The Lesley University campus in Cambridge consists of a number of Victorian Houses, as well as larger buildings for classrooms, offices, and dormitories. Most of the University's main campus is located on Everett, Mellen, Sacramento, and Wendell

Streets. In 1994, the university acquired the Porter Exchange building on Massachusetts Avenue, which features retail, administrative offices, and classrooms.

Study Committee Discussion

The Agassiz neighborhood has one of the highest percentages of residents living in group quarters. According to 2000 U.S. Census data the Agassiz neighborhood consisted of 1,572 residents in group quarters or 30% of the neighborhood population. This is virtually all (98.7%) due to

dormitories and apartments associated with Harvard and Lesley Universities.

The Study Committee sought to address a number of issues regarding the institutions located in Agassiz. Of particular concern were the future development plans of both universities. The Committee also discussed housing for university employees, landscaping on the campuses and along campus edges, and community involvement in university events and programs.



Lesley University, 63-69 Oxford Street

Institutional Recommendations

-
1. In conjunction with their residential projects, Harvard and Lesley should consider including housing for their hourly-wage employees.
 2. Harvard and Lesley should inform Cambridge residents of upcoming events open to the public.

Lesley University

1. The University should improve the landscaping at the Oxford Street side of 47 Oxford Street.
2. Lesley should work with a neighborhood committee to discuss development issues with Agassiz.

Harvard University

Note that Harvard University's proposals for the North Yard area, including the rezoning of the Hammond Street edge, were made public after the neighborhood study process for the Agassiz neighborhood was nearly complete. While this report recognizes the North Yard proposals, and provides recommendations regarding Harvard University, it does not offer an exhaustive review and analysis of the proposals or their effects on the neighborhood.

1. As the University considers the development of the North Yard, the Committee recommends the formation of a committee to work with Harvard on the issues of:
 - Density, height and open space of proposed development;
 - Construction impacts;
 - Cumulative impact of traffic;
 - Preserving neighborhood character and scale;

- Preserving as much public use and space open to public use as possible;
 - Exploring options to reduce the traffic from the proposed new Harvard garage exiting onto Oxford Street, including:
 1. Making Everett two-way to accommodate ingress and egress
 2. Making Divinity Way an entrance or exit for garage traffic
 3. Using Francis/Bryant Street as entrance or exit for garage traffic
 4. Restricting parking on Oxford St between Everett and Wendell at peak vehicle hours.
2. The local Harvard museums should be requested to offer free admission to Cambridge residents and school groups.
 3. The Committee supports Harvard's objective to extend the pattern of publicly accessible quadrangles to the neighborhood boundaries.
 4. The City of Cambridge should encourage Harvard University to incorporate publicly accessible open space on Oxford Street/Divinity school property.
 5. The Committee requests that Harvard University landscape the existing parking lot on Oxford Street once underground parking is constructed.
 6. The Committee recommends that Harvard move the existing shuttle bus location, as both shuttle buses and tour buses clog the Oxford and Kirkland Streets intersection.

7. All the gates at the Academy of Arts and Sciences should remain open during posted hours.

8. Harvard Law School should involve the neighborhood early in its planning process.



Harvard University, Kirkland and Quincy Streets